



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

4 DECEMBER 2020

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Newark – Prosecutors Charge Nine People in Large-Scale Drug Ring

(U) In separate indictments, federal prosecutors have secured drug distribution charges against nine people allegedly part of large-scale methamphetamine and cocaine rings that authorities say smuggled and sold the drugs in the Bay Area, court records show. Out of the nine defendants charged in three indictments and alleged to be part of two separate drug rings, prosecutors have singled out two as alleged leaders: Francisco Ricardo Miranda, of Newark, and Juvencio Gamez Cid, also known as Alex Jose Torres Carrero.

SOURCE: 3 December 2020, [The Mercury News](#)

(U) Sacramento – California May Have Sent \$1 Billion in Jobless Benefits to People Out of State

(U) California may have sent a billion dollars or more in unemployment benefits to people out of the state, including to other countries, and much of it may be based on fraudulent claims, several prosecutors warned Thursday. District attorneys from nine counties including San Diego, Sacramento and Riverside sent a letter to Governor Newsom urging him to use his executive powers to increase resources investigating widespread unemployment benefit fraud involving prison inmates and to immediately check jobless claims against personal data of those behind bars. The prosecutors told the governor they have received “unverified information” that the state Employment Development Department has distributed at least \$1 billion in unemployment benefits to out-of-state claimants.

SOURCE: 4 December 2020, [Los Angeles Times](#)

(U) San Diego – More Charges Unsealed Against Doctor in COVID-19 Treatment Case

(U) A San Diego doctor already accused of promoting a controversial COVID-19 treatment as a “magic bullet” is facing new charges, substantially broadening the scope of the federal prosecution against him. Dr. Jennings Ryan Staley began offering hydroxychloroquine after some research early on in the pandemic identified the malaria drug as a potential COVID-19 treatment. But the drug was not authorized for COVID-19 treatment, and any use under a US Food and Drug Administration emergency authorization would have to follow stringent guidelines. Federal prosecutors say Staley did not adhere to those guidelines and instead set out to sell “COVID treatment packs” while touting the drug as a cure.

SOURCE: 3 December 2020, [The San Diego Union-Tribune](#)

(U) Sunnyvale – Police Arrest Five on Suspicion of \$1 Million Benefits-Fraud Scheme

(U) Sunnyvale police on Thursday said they had identified at least 100 victims of an alleged unemployment benefit fraud scheme after an initial residential burglary arrest uncovered evidence of widespread identity theft. George Ramirez, a 35-year-old San Jose resident, was arrested on 16 November for a residential burglary. Officials searched the hotel and allegedly found several stolen personal identification items from residents in the Bay Area. Upon further investigation authorities uncovered an alleged unemployment benefits fraud ring involving Ramirez and four other suspects. The investigation led to the arrests of five people allegedly connected to the ring, which officials said stole approximately \$1 million in state unemployment benefits.

SOURCE: 3 December 2020, [San Francisco Chronicle](#)

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(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

(U) Texas – Police Rescue 26 People from Alleged Human Smuggling Operation

(U) Houston – Houston police said they rescued 26 people from a human smuggling operation after discovering them in a home located less than a five-minute's walk from an elementary school. Police said they were alerted to the scene after they received a report of a man running down a street yelling that he had been kidnapped. When officers arrived, the man said nearly 30 others were being held hostage in a nearby house. Police entered the boarded-up home and found 25 men and one woman. When questioned, many said they were being held against their will and had been there for a week.

SOURCE: 4 December 2020, [NPR](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) Connecticut – Police Seize 1,700-Pounds of Marijuana Worth \$15 Million, Arrest Two Suspects

(U) West Haven – West Haven police arrested two people and seized 1,700-pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$15 million on Wednesday. Police say that over the past several months, officers have been investigating a large-scale international marijuana trafficking operation. They determined that the suspects were using a storage facility in West Haven to distribute large quantities of marijuana throughout the tri-state area.

SOURCE: 3 December 2020, [WTNH](#)

(U) District of Columbia – More Than 1,000 Chinese Researchers Left US Amid Crackdown

(U) Washington DC – More than 1,000 Chinese researchers have left the United States amid a crackdown on alleged technology theft. US Justice Department's National Security Division reported the researchers had left the country while the department launched multiple criminal cases against Chinese operatives for industrial and technological espionage.

SOURCE: 2 December 2020, [Reuters](#)

(U) Kentucky – Militia Group Leader Faces Federal Charges

(U) Louisville – The leader of a Black militia group in Louisville has been arrested and accused of pointing a rifle at officers on 4 September. NFAC leader John Fitzgerald Johnson, also known as Grandmaster Jay, has been charged with assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers after he allegedly aimed an AR platform rifle at members of the US Secret Service and LMPD while they were on the roof of the Jefferson County Grand Jury building.

SOURCE: 4 December 2020, [WVIH](#)

(U) New York – Suspect Killed After Shooting and Wounding Two US Marshals

(U) Bronx – A suspect is dead after a confrontation in the Bronx Friday morning in which two US Marshals were shot and wounded, according to law enforcement officials. The Marshals are reportedly in "OK condition," with injuries not considered life threatening, officials said. A gun was recovered near the 35-year-old suspect, who was wanted in connection with the wounding of a Massachusetts State Trooper.

SOURCE: 4 December 2020, [CNN](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) China – US in Talks with Huawei Finance Chief about Resolving Criminal Charges

(U) Shenzhen – The US Justice Department is discussing a deal with Huawei Technologies Chief Finance

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Officer Meng Wanzhou that would allow her to return home to China from Canada, in exchange for admitting wrongdoing in a criminal case that has strained Beijing's relations with the US and Canada. Ms. Meng faces wire and bank fraud charges related to alleged violations of US sanctions on Iran. Lawyers for Ms. Meng, on Huawei's behalf, have spoken to Justice Department officials in recent weeks about the possibility of reaching a "deferred prosecution agreement." Ms. Meng would be required to admit to some of the allegations against her, but prosecutors would agree to potentially defer and later drop the charges if she cooperated.

SOURCE: 3 December 2020, [The Wall Street Journal](#)

(U) Philippines – ISIS-Inspired Group Attack Town Center

(U) Maguindanao – About 50 armed men attacked the town area in Barangay Poblacion in Datu Piang, Maguindanao late Thursday evening. The group has been identified as member of the Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)-inspired Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) led by Karialan Saga Animbang and a person identified as "Motorola" with about 50 members. Authorities are still confirming reports that the police station in the town plaza in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, had been overrun, that a police car was burned, that a church was on fire. The military, in a statement said that they are in control of the situation and that there are no reported casualties.

SOURCE: 4 December 2020, [MSN](#)

(U) Yemen – Saudi-Led Coalition Intercepted Explosive-Laden Drone Launched by Houthis

(U) Sana'a – The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said early on Friday it intercepted and destroyed an explosive-laden drone launched by the Iran-aligned Houthi movement towards Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have regularly accused the Houthis of using drones and missiles to attack Saudi Arabia.

SOURCE: 3 December 2020, [Reuters](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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